

Michele R. Stafford, Esq. (SBN 172509)
George R. Nemiroff, Esq. (SBN 262058)
SALTZMAN & JOHNSON LAW CORPORATION
1141 Harbor Bay Parkway, Suite 100
Alameda, California 94502
Telephone: (510) 906-4710
Email: mstafford@sjlawcorp.com
Email: gnemiroff@sjlawcorp.com

Attorneys for Plaintiffs, Operating Engineers'
Health And Welfare Trust Fund for Northern California, et al.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

OPERATING ENGINEERS' HEALTH AND
WELFARE TRUST FUND FOR NORTHERN
CALIFORNIA; RUSSELL E. BURNS and JAMES
E. MURRAY, Trustees;

PENSION TRUST FUND FOR OPERATING
ENGINEERS; RUSSELL E. BURNS and JAMES E.
MURRAY, Trustees;

PENSIONED OPERATING ENGINEERS'
HEALTH AND WELFARE TRUST FUND;
RUSSELL E. BURNS and JAMES E. MURRAY,
Trustees;

OPERATING ENGINEERS AND PARTICIPATING
EMPLOYERS PRE-APPRENTICE, APPRENTICE
AND JOURNEYMEN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION
TRAINING FUND; RUSSELL E. BURNS and
JAMES E. MURRAY, Trustees;

OPERATING ENGINEERS LOCAL UNION NO. 3
VACATION, HOLIDAY AND SICK PAY TRUST
FUND; RUSSELL E. BURNS and JAMES E.
MURRAY, Trustees;

HEAVY AND HIGHWAY COMMITTEE; and

OPERATING ENGINEERS LOCAL 3 OF THE
INTERNATIONAL UNION OF OPERATING
ENGINEERS, AFL-CIO,

Plaintiffs,

v.

Case No.

COMPLAINT

1 FERREIRA CONSTRUCTION CO., INC. dba
 2 FERREIRA COASTAL CONSTRUCTION CO., a
 3 New Jersey corporation,
 Defendant.

4 Parties

5 1. The Operating Engineers' Health and Welfare Trust Fund for Northern California (which
 6 includes the Addiction Recovery Program, Inc.) ("Health Fund"); Pension Trust Fund for Operating
 7 Engineers (which includes the Pension Plan for the Pension Trust Fund for Operating Engineers, the
 8 Rehabilitation Plan, and the Operating Engineers Annuity Plan) ("Pension Plan"); Pensioned Operating
 9 Engineers' Health and Welfare Trust Fund ("Pensioned Health Fund"); Operating Engineers and
 10 Participating Employers Pre-apprentice, Apprentice and Journeymen Affirmative Action Training Fund
 11 ("Affirmative Action Training Fund"); and the Operating Engineers Local Union No. 3 Vacation,
 12 Holiday and Sick Pay Trust Fund ("Vacation Fund") (collectively referred to hereinafter as the "Trust
 13 Funds"), are employee benefit plans as defined in the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of
 14 1974 ("ERISA") § 3(3), 29 U.S.C. § 1002(3). Russell E. Burns and James E. Murray are Co-Chairmen
 15 of the Joint Boards of Trustees of the Health Fund, Pension Fund, Pensioned Health Fund, and
 16 Affirmative Action Training Fund and have authority to act on behalf of all Trustees of those Funds.
 17 Russell E. Burns and James E. Murray are Co-Chairmen of the Joint Boards of Trustees of the Vacation
 18 Fund and have authority to act on behalf of all Trustees of the Vacation Fund. The Trust Funds and their
 19 fiduciaries are together referred to herein as "ERISA Plaintiffs" or "Plaintiffs."

20 2. The Heavy and Highway Committee is a Trust established under the Labor Management
 21 Relations Act ("LMRA"), 302(c)(9), 29 U.S.C. § 186(c)(9).

22 3. Operating Engineers Local Union No. 3 of the International Union of Operating
 23 Engineers, AFL-CIO ("Union") is a labor organization as defined in § 2(5) of the National Labor
 24 Relations Act ("NLRA"), 29 U.S.C. § 152(5), and is represented by counsel herein for the limited
 25 purpose of collecting union dues owing as part of the subject contribution claims of Plaintiffs, and not
 26 for any other cause of action. The Union expressly reserves its rights to pursue any other cause of action
 27 on its own behalf.

28 4. FERREIRA CONSTRUCTION CO., INC. dba FERREIRA COASTAL

1 CONSTRUCTION CO., a New Jersey corporation, or (“Ferreira” or “Defendant”, is an employer by
2 virtue of ERISA § 3(5), 29 U.S.C. § 1002(5), and NLRA § 2(2), 29 U.S.C. § 152(2).

3
4 Jurisdiction

5 5. Jurisdiction exists in this Court over the claims asserted by ERISA Plaintiffs by virtue of
6 ERISA § 502, 29 U.S.C. § 1132, in that Plaintiffs seek to enforce the provisions of ERISA and the terms
7 of their plans, seek to enjoin the acts and practices which violate ERISA, seek equitable relief to redress
8 such violations, and seek all other appropriate relief under ERISA.

9 6. Jurisdiction exists in this Court over all the claims by virtue of LMRA § 301, 29 U.S.C. §
10 185, in that Plaintiffs seek to enforce the terms and conditions of a valid Bargaining Agreement.

11 7. To the extent jurisdiction over any claim does not exist under ERISA or the LMRA,
12 supplemental jurisdiction exists in this Court over such claims by virtue of 29 U.S.C. § 1367 in that they
13 arise out of a common nucleus of operative facts that form the basis of the federal claims asserted
14 herein, each of which has a substantial ground in federal jurisdiction.

15 Venue

16 8. Venue is conferred upon this Court by ERISA § 502, 29 U.S.C. § 1132. Where an action
17 is brought under ERISA § 502 in a district court of the United States, it may be brought at Plaintiffs’
18 discretion, in the district where the plan is administered, where the breach took place, or where a
19 defendant resides or may be found, and process may be served in any other district where a defendant
20 resides or may be found. ERISA Plaintiffs’ Trust Funds are administered in this district at their principal
21 place of business in Alameda, California. Thus, jurisdiction and venue are properly grounded with this
22 Court.

23 9. Venue exists in this Court with respect to the claims under LMRA § 301(a), 29 U.S.C. §
24 185, as this Court has jurisdiction over the parties, as the Union maintains its principal place of business
25 in this district, its duly authorized officers or agents are engaged in representing employee members in
26 this district, and the claims arise in this district.

27 Intradistrict Assignment

28 10. The basis for assignment of this action to this Court’s Oakland Division is that all of the

1 events and omissions giving rise to Plaintiffs' claims occurred in the County of Alameda, where ERISA
 2 Plaintiffs' Funds and the Bargained Plans are administered, and where Defendant therefore failed to
 3 fulfill its statutory and contractual obligations to Plaintiffs.

4 Bargaining Agreement

5 11. Defendant Ferreira is a signatory to the Master Agreement between the Union and the
 6 United Contractors, Associated General Contractors of California, Inc., Industrial Contractors, UMIC,
 7 Inc. and Northern Alliance of Engineering Contractors. Defendant is also signatory to a Community
 8 Benefits Agreement for the California High Speed Rail Project (collectively, the "Bargaining
 9 Agreements"). The Bargaining Agreements, which incorporate the terms of the Trust Agreements
 10 establishing the Trust Funds ("Trust Agreements"), require Defendant to provide employer contributions
 11 to Plaintiffs' Trust Funds, to the Union for union dues, and to other plans more fully described in the
 12 Bargaining Agreements. ERISA plaintiffs are third-party beneficiaries of the Bargaining Agreements.

13 12. Under the terms of the Bargaining Agreements, and Trust Agreements incorporated
 14 therein, Defendant is required to pay certain contributions to the Construction Industry Force Account;
 15 Contract Administration Fund; Job Placement Center and Market Area Committee Administration
 16 Market Preservation Fund; Operating Engineers Industry Stabilization Trust Fund; and Business
 17 Development Trust Fund (including the California Alliance for Jobs) (together referred herein as
 18 "Bargained Plans"). Plaintiffs' Boards of Trustees are assigned under the Bargaining Agreements to
 19 receive and administer monies due to these Bargained Plans.

20 13. Under the Bargaining and Trust Agreements, which are incorporated into the Bargaining
 21 Agreements and made binding on Defendant, Defendant is required to regularly pay to ERISA Plaintiffs,
 22 the Bargained Plans, and the Union, certain sums of money, the amounts of which are determined by the
 23 hours worked by Defendant's employees. Contributions are due on the fifteenth (15th) day of the month
 24 following the month in which hours were worked, and are considered delinquent if not received by the
 25 twenty-fifth (25th) day of that month. Defendant is also required, pursuant to the Bargaining and Trust
 26 Agreements, to pay liquidated damages in the amount of ten percent (10%) for each delinquent
 27 contribution, but in the amount of twenty percent (20%) for each delinquent contribution which is the
 28

1 subject of litigation. Moreover, the Bargaining and Trust Agreements provide that interest accrues on
2 delinquent contributions at the rates reasonably set by the Trustees from the date they become
3 delinquent, which is the twenty-sixth (26th) day of the month in which payment was due, until paid in
4 full.

5 14. The Bargaining and Trust Agreements further require Defendant to maintain time records
6 or time cards, and to permit an authorized Trust Fund representative to examine such records of
7 Defendant as are necessary to determine whether Defendant has made full payment of all sums owed to
8 ERISA Plaintiffs. Should an audit of Defendant's records reveal Defendant has failed to provide full and
9 prompt payment of all sums due to Plaintiffs, Defendant must reimburse Plaintiffs for the amounts due,
10 including audit fees, in addition to any other obligations pursuant to the Bargaining and Trust
11 Agreements.

12 Factual Allegations

13 15. Defendant has failed and refused to report and pay contributions for hours worked by its
14 employees during the months of October 2016, April 2017 through June 2017, January 2018, May 2018
15 and June 2018. Liquidated damages and interest have been incurred and are owed to Plaintiffs for the
16 unpaid contributions for these months as well as those incurred on Defendant's late-paid contributions
17 for the months of September 2016 through November 2016, January 2017, March 2017 through June
18 2017, December 2017 and February 2018 through April 2018.

19 16. Plaintiffs are also entitled to recover any and all other contributions, and all liquidated
20 damages and interest on delinquent contributions not specified above, found due on timecards, audit, or
21 otherwise, including estimated contributions for any months Defendant fails to report to Plaintiffs,
22 through the time of Judgment. Plaintiffs reserve the right to conduct an audit to determine whether there
23 are any additional amounts due from Defendant.

24 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**
25 **For Payment of Delinquent Contributions, Interest, Liquidated Damages,**
26 **Attorneys' Fees and Costs Against Defendant**

27 17. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate by reference paragraphs 1 through 16, above.

28 18. Defendant has a contractual duty to timely pay the required contributions to Plaintiffs and

1 the Bargained Plans, and to timely pay dues to the Union, pursuant to the Bargaining Agreement and
2 Trust Agreements. Defendant also has a contractual duty under the Bargaining Agreement and Trust
3 Agreements to permit an audit of their records to determine whether they are making full and prompt
4 payment of all sums required to be paid by them to Plaintiffs, and to pay Plaintiffs all amounts found
5 due as a result of an audit, including audit fees.

6 19. In addition, Defendant has a statutory duty to timely make the required payments to
7 Plaintiffs under ERISA § 515, 29 U.S.C. § 1145, and LMRA § 301(a).

8 20. By failing to make the required payments to Plaintiffs, Defendant breached the
9 Bargaining and Trust Agreements and is in violation of ERISA § 515, 29 U.S.C. § 1145, and LMRA §
10 301(a).

11 21. Defendant's failure and refusal to pay the required contributions was at all times, and still
12 is, willful. Defendant continues to breach the Bargaining Agreement, and incorporated Trust
13 Agreements, by failing to pay all amounts owed as alleged. Said refusal is unjustified and done with
14 knowledge and intent.

15 22. ERISA Plaintiffs are without an adequate remedy at law and will suffer continuing and
16 irreparable injury, loss and damage unless Defendant is ordered specifically to perform all obligations
17 required on Defendant's part to be performed under ERISA, 29 U.S.C. §§ 1101-1381, the LMRA, 29
18 U.S.C. §§ 141-197, and the Bargaining and Trust Agreements, and are restrained from continuing to
19 refuse to perform as required thereunder.

20 23. This Court is authorized to issue injunctive relief based on the traditional standard. As set
21 forth above, ERISA Plaintiffs have a strong likelihood of success on the merits. There is the possibility
22 that ERISA Plaintiffs' Trust Funds and their participants will suffer irreparable injuries. The balance of
23 hardships and advancement of public interest favor ERISA Plaintiffs.

24 24. This Complaint does not in any manner relate to statutory withdrawal liability that may or
25 may not be assessed against Defendant. ERISA Plaintiffs expressly reserve the right to pursue any such
26 withdrawal liability claims against Defendant as provided by ERISA Plaintiffs' Plan Documents, Trust
27 Agreements, and the law.

Prayer

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs pray as follows:

1. For a judgment against Defendant as follows:

(a) Any unpaid contributions, due at time of Judgment, including those specified above as well as any other contributions determined as due by audit, timecards, or otherwise, including estimated contributions for any months Defendant fails to report to Plaintiffs, pursuant to ERISA § 502(g)(2)(A), 29 U.S.C. § 1132(g)(2)(A);

i. To ERISA Plaintiffs and the Bargained Plans, in accordance with ERISA § 502(g)(2)(A), 29 U.S.C. § 1132(g)(2)(A) and the Bargaining Agreement;

ii. To the Union in accordance with the Bargaining Agreement.

(b) Liquidated damages on all late-paid and unpaid contributions in an amount provided for under the Bargaining and Trust Agreements, and with respect to ERISA Plaintiffs, ERISA § 502(g)(2)(c), 29 U.S.C. § 1132(g)(2)(c).

(c) Interest on all late-paid and unpaid contributions at the rates set in accordance with the Bargaining Agreement, the Trust Agreements, and ERISA § 502(g)(2)(B), 29 U.S.C. § 1132(g)(2)(B).

2. Plaintiffs' reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of this action, including any audit fees, in accordance with ERISA § 502(g)(2)(D) and (E), 29 U.S.C. § 1132(g)(2)(D) and (E); and in accordance with the Bargaining Agreement for all Bargained Plans; and with LMRA § 301, 29 U.S.C. § 185, for all Plaintiffs.

3. For an order,

(a) requiring that Defendant comply with its obligations to Plaintiffs under the terms of the Bargaining Agreement and the Trust Agreements;

(b) enjoining Defendant from violating the terms of those documents and of ERISA; and,

(c) enjoining Defendant from disposing of any assets until said terms have been complied with, and from continuation or operation of Defendant's business until said terms have been

1 complied with.

2 4. That the Court retain jurisdiction of this case pending compliance with its orders.

3 5. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

4
5 DATED: August 6, 2018

SALTZMAN & JOHNSON LAW CORPORATION

6
7 By: _____/S/

8 George R. Nemiroff
9 Attorneys for Operating Engineers' Health And
10 Welfare Trust Fund, et al.
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28